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Press Service,
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COMMUNITY DINNERS
OR CHURCH SUPPERS
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Meals for large gatherings can be both pleasant and profitable occasions if they are well planned in advance, and well managed at serving time. It's up to the chairman to see that there is no last minute confusion. The menu, the market order, the plan of procedure, and the work expected of each helper should be written down and talked over several days beforehand, so that each one knows exactly what she is responsible for. Everything and anything that can be done the day before will save time and make the affair go smoothly, so in choosing the menu this point should be especially kept in mind.

Some of the food specialists of the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, have had considerable experience in planning and managing meals for large groups. They make several good suggestions.

"Since the meal must pay for itself, or possibly show a profit, the matter of expense has to be carefully considered. The price to be asked, and the number to be served, determine to some extent the choice of foods on the menu, and it is also governed by the equipment you have to work with. If there isn't very much room in the kitchen for several people to work at one time, avoid elaborate menus, and plan to have as much as possible of the food brought from home ready to use. Choose only dishes that can be prepared easily in large quantities, and that can be prepared ahead of time and stand without deterioration.

"Foods to avoid are those that melt quickly, that are too moist and likely to run on the plates, those that will get overcooked when kept hot, or get cold during serving. For example, for the first course, fruit cocktail is a better selection for a crowd than soup. The fruit cocktail may be set in place before the meal is served, while the soup is liable to get chilled easily,

and is difficult for inexperienced waitresses to carry.

"If someone in your group is well known for a special kind of cake or hot bread, make that the feature dish of the meal and use it in advertising your dinner. 'Mrs. Smith's Famous Rolls', 'Mrs. Brown's Spoon Bread,' 'Mrs. Jones' Biscuits' or layer cake or whatever is popular.

"It's much easier to invite the guests for a definite hour than to say 'Supper from six to eight.' Everyone sits down at once, the food doesn't have to stand, and the volunteer waitresses are not confused as to who has or has not been served.

"Try unfamiliar recipes on the family first, both for method of preparation and to find out the number of servings obtainable. Base your estimate of the amounts of food you will need on the amounts required for your own family, only remember that foods cooked in larger quantities divide up more advantageously. Also in a meal served for profit, portions may be slightly smaller than home servings. Foods served in sauce or gravy go farther. For instance, one baked potato must be allowed for every person at a table, but with creamed potatoes you can allow two large potatoes for three people. The same is true of creamed foods in patty shells or on toast, and scalloped dishes.

"Meat balls are a better choice than steak from the standpoint of economy and satisfactory handling. A gelatin salad, such as tomato aspic or combinations of vegetables in aspic, is inexpensive, attractive, and convenient. It can be fixed the day before if there's plenty of refrigerator space. To save dishwashing use little paper cups for individual molds.

"Here are two successful menus for cold weather community or church gatherings:

1. Meat balls in tomato sauce, scalloped potatoes, canned green beans, pickles or relish, hot biscuits or rolls. (buttered in the kitchen before serving). ice cream with pineapple sauce, homemade cake, coffee.

2. Savory creamed chicken on thin crisp toast, baked stuffed potatoes, peas, hot rolls, jellied salad with shredded cabbage, raw carrot and green pepper in it, apricot and prune pie, coffee."

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